

## Land Stewardship

The Conservancy's land stewardship program is responsible for monitoring, managing and maintaining a system of 45 properties that total more than 13,000 acres across western and central Pennsylvania. These properties are owned by the Conservancy and open to the public for recreation. In addition, the Conservancy holds conservation easements on more than 36,500 acres.



### Property Management

Our intent is to own protected land that hosts examples of the highest ecological values and other important features, and provides opportunities for various forms of recreation, education and research. We conserve and manage land in each of the major regions where our land conservation program works: the Juniata and Potomac, Lake Erie, Laurel Highlands, Ohio and Lower Allegheny, Upper Allegheny (including the Clarion River and French Creek) and West Branch Susquehanna.

Management of each Conservancy-owned property is guided by a plan that details the conservation values recognized at the site and the associated goals/actions necessary to maintain or enhance those values. Our land stewardship staff and a team of dedicated volunteer land stewards conduct regular monitoring of the land and implement management activities. From March through November, [monthly workdays](#) are held to complete projects such as trail maintenance, tree planting, exotic [invasive species](#) control and dump removal.

## **Easement Monitoring and Enforcement**

Stewardship of our conservation easement properties includes baseline documentation of the conservation values, annual monitoring by our staff and maintaining communication with the landowners. As an easement property is sold to new ownership or passed down to family members, we make certain that all new landowners understand the terms and intent of the easement. In the event an easement violation occurs, we take into consideration the impact to the conservation values and any mitigating circumstances, and then work with the landowner to resolve the matter as amicably as possible, while ensuring there is no net loss in conservation value.

## **Management Activities**

To effectively care for our properties, our stewardship team undertakes a variety of activities, including:

- [Bat](#) roost installation
- [Eastern massasauga](#) habitat improvement
- [Eastern hemlock](#) conservation
- Invasive plant control
- Parking and trail enhancements
- Lake shore restoration
- [Riparian forest](#) restoration
- Tree planting

## **What's New?**

- [\*\*Spring is the Season to Enjoy Vernal Pools on WPC Properties\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Katz Natural Area Boy Scout Eagle Project\*\*](#)  
A local Boy Scout has completed his Eagle Scout Service Project at [Katz Natural Area](#), Crawford County. The Scout and his crew constructed a 12-foot long wheelchair-accessible picnic table, painted the interior of the picnic pavilion, and constructed a trailside bench and map display case.
- [\*\*Katz Natural Area Aquatic Organism Passage/Access Improvement\*\*](#)  
A large culvert under the driveway at the main access to [Katz Natural Area](#) has been removed and replaced with a new, larger culvert that facilitates aquatic organism passage. The new culvert has allowed the entrance to the parking area to be widened, which better facilitates bus access.

- **French Creek Cleanup**  
Fourteen volunteers and two Land Stewardship staff members participated in the 26<sup>th</sup> annual French Creek Cleanup on September 8, 2018. Volunteers and staff worked primarily at the Conservancy's [Conneaut Marsh Natural Area](#) near Conneaut Lake and [Mystic Valley Conservation Area](#) near Cambridge Springs. The WPC Land Stewardship Volunteers team collected and transported 3,640 pounds of waste in a six-hour time period.
- **Erie County Site Restoration**  
Multiple abandoned structures have been removed and their former footprints restored on two preserves in Erie County: [Lake Pleasant Conservation Area](#) and [West Branch French Creek Conservation Area](#).

### [BECOME A LAND STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEER](#)

- [Land Conservation](#)
- [Conservation Easements](#)
- [Explore our Properties](#)
- [Farmland Access Initiative](#)
- [Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program](#)
- [Accredited Land Trust](#)

### **For More Information:**

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